labial herpes should warrant the diagnosis of the epidemic form of the disease. It must be remembered, however, that the appearance of herpes in the course of meningitis does not necessarily imply that the subject is not tuberculous, or that a mixed infection, even affecting the meninges, may not exist. In other words, the appearance of herpes labialis in acute meningitis pleads only against the diagnosis of a pure tubercular infection.

This conclusion is important from a prognostic point, but it does not warrant the expectation, as in pneumonia, that the appearance of herpes is of good omen. In meningitis, by suggesting the possibility of the presence of a more favorable type of the disease, it may encourage the hope of retrocession of the symptoms—a termination nearly, if not always, impossible in the tubercular form.

THE SURGICAL *vs.* THE MEDICO-PÆDAGOGIC TREATMENT OF IDIOTIC AND BACKWARD CHILDREN.

BOURNEVILLE (*Le Progrès Médical*, 1893, No. 25, p. 465), in an elaborate paper under this title, collects all the cases of craniectomy published since Fuller's first operation in 1878, which preceded by twelve years the more widely-known experiments of Lannelongue, to whom the operation is generally accredited. Eighty-three cases are embraced in these tables. The operative mortality was 15 or 18 per cent. Under the term medico-pædagogic treatment he includes the system of training instituted by the elder Seguin, and perfected by the introduction of modern methods, lasting over a period of years, which in nearly all cases produces decided amelioration and often restores such children to a condition permitting them to live happily in society.

The conclusions from study of the surgical aspect of treatment are as follows:

1. Surgical treatment of idiocy rests upon an hypothesis which is not confirmed by the pathological anatomy.
2. Premature ossification of the sutures of the cranium does not exist in the different forms of idiocy. Only exceptionally is partial synostosis encountered.
3. The lesions to which idiocy are due are ordinarly profound, extended, varied, and little susceptible of being modified by craniectomy.
4. The diagnosis of synostosis of sutures and thickness of the cranium cannot be made by present methods of investigation.
5. According to the majority of surgeons the results obtained by operative measures are slight, doubtful, or negative. Grave accidents (paralysis, convulsions, etc.), and death, may follow operation.

TREATMENT OF TUBERCULAR PERITONITIS IN CHILDREN.

A STUDY, based upon four cases of his own, leads CONITZER (*Deutsche med. Wochenschr.*, 1893, No. 29, p. 688) to the following conclusions:

1. Peritoneal tuberculosis is capable of spontaneous recovery; the dry form very rarely, the exudative more frequently.
2. The exudative form, which terminates in recovery, has been considered by many writers as a simple chronic peritonitis or an essential ascites.

3. All forms of tubercular peritonitis can be cured or at least benefited by laparotomy after other forms of treatment have failed.

4. The success of the operation depends upon the form of peritonitis (the exudative is more favorable than the dry); upon the duration of the disease; and upon the complications.

5. The operation is indicated when internal treatment fails; it is contraindicated in very feeble subjects and those presenting other tubercular lesions.

HYGIENE AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

UNDER THE CHARGE OF

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Dissemination of Cholera Germs by Air-currents.

N. William (*Zeitschrift für Hygiene und Infectionskrankheiten*, Bd. xv., Aug. 25, 1893), experimenting on the spread of cholera germs by moving air, reports that while that means has been regarded as most favorable to their spread, in actual experiment it fails. Mixed with dry dust the germs live but a short time, and perish more quickly when a current of air is conducted through the dust. When the dust is distributed through large volumes of air the germs quickly die, and only when the impregnated dust is let fall into a suitable culture medium can a very small proportion of living bacilli be obtained. In other words, cholera germs adherent to particles of dust floating in and moved about by the air cannot retain their activity for any length of time nor for any considerable distance.

Poisons in Canned Vegetables

The Department of Agriculture, Chemical Division, has been investigating the matter of canned foods, under the direction of H. W. Wiley (*Foods and Food Adulterants*, 1893, part viii.). The work was directed especially to methods of preserving, preservatives employed, and food value and digestibility. As to the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness of added preservatives, the report draws attention to the fact that the great weight of testimony is to the effect that while these substances in small quantities are not injurious to health, their continued use may finally become prejudicial. It is also shown that the same quantities which prevent the action of micro-organisms, and thus prevent decomposition, are also active in the digestive organs and hinder the normal functions of the digestive ferments. There are other added chemicals in many varieties of canned vegetables used for adding to the attractiveness of their appearance. Considerable attention was paid to the